

Pocasset Wampanoag Tribe of MA. & RI.
275B Indiantown Road, Fall River MA



To House Chair Alice Peisch, Senate Chair Jason Lewis, and all education committee members,

The Pocasset Wampanoag Tribe stands in support of Bill H581/S295; An act to prohibit the use of Native American mascots by public schools in the Commonwealth. Legislation is long overdue to remove offensive, stereotypical Native American mascots from schools. The world is changing. It is time that the commonwealth does as well. Indigenous people have longed for a day where we are no longer mocked and paraded around like mythical creatures, aggressive warriors, and savages. Please hear our pleas to pass this bill. It is our job as tribal leaders and state officials to ensure our children are being seen, heard, and protected. Research has shown that these mascots have negative psychological and social impacts on native and non-native students alike. The use of mascots, logos, etc. imprints an image of Native Americans that are often stereotypical and negative to children at a young, impressionable age. It has been said that these mascots are honoring Native Americans, but a lot of us do not feel that way. These images negatively impact how any child views Native people.

Every ingenious person or group carries the inherited trauma of their people. The history of the indigenous people in this country is not well taught in schools, and the commonwealth is no exception. I know this first-hand. I went to public school in the commonwealth all my life and never once heard the history of my people. Yes, we learned the romanticized story of the First Thanksgiving and went on a field trip to Plymouth Rock. That is not enough! More focus needs to be put into creating curriculum around local Native American tribes, the impacts of colonization, and that we are still here today. Instead, school districts are more invested in the cost of changing the mascots.

We have tried at a local level to get offensive mascots removed, but attempts remain unsuccessful. We were not heard, and it solidified the need for state legislation regarding this matter. It is time we are heard. It is time we are celebrated for who we are. It is time for a change.

Sincerely,

Megan Page

Pocasset Wampanoag Tribe

(508)837-8850